

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of minor informalities noted by the Examiner. The specification has been amended to attend to any informalities, including those kindly identified by the Examiner. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claim Status

Claims 1 through 18 remain pending in the application. Claims 1 through 6, 7 through 14, and 16 through 18 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. Claims 1 and 10 are the only independent claims pending in the application.

Section 112 Rejection

Claims 1 through 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, Claims 1 through 6, 7 through 14, and 16 through 18 have been amended. In so doing, Claim 1 has been amended to include a recitation that the developer container is cleaned during the suction step. In addition, Claims 5, 10, and 14 have been amended to avoid the recitations underlying the rejection and to even more succinctly define the invention.

Section 102 Rejections

Claims 1 through 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,243,388 (Berns, et al.).

Claims 1 through 18 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,278,853 (Ban, et al.).

The rationale underlying each of the foregoing rejections is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Traversal of Rejections

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amended Claim 1 calls for a cleaning method for cleaning a developer container that includes a blowing step for blowing air through an opening formed in the developer container at a first flow rate; and a suction step for sucking air through the opening at a second flow rate, which is larger than the first flow rate to suction toner from the developer container to clean the developer container. The blowing step and the suction step are carried out concurrently while supplying ambient air into the developer container through an ambient air inlet.

Berns, et al. discloses a system for cleaning a developer unit. More specifically, Berns, et al. discloses a toner stack 143 and an outboard nozzle port 150. A vacuum nozzle tool is inserted into nozzle port 150. A vacuum device 180 connected to the vacuum nozzle tool causes air to be sucked into the developer unit housing through toner stack 143 and out nozzle port 150. See Fig. 5, and column 7, lines 17 and 18, lines 41 through 44; and column 8, lines 59 through 62.

Ban, et al. discloses a recycling method for a toner container. More specifically, Ban, et al. discloses blowing air into a toner supply container 301 through a toner supply outlet 301(a). At the same time, air is sucked out of the toner supply container 301 through another opening. See column 25, line 62 through column 20, line 8.

Both Berns, et al. and Ban, et al. disclose that the air is blown through one end of a container, and air is sucked from the container through the other end. Both Berns, et al. and Ban, et al. fail to disclose or suggest that the air is blown through and sucked from a common opening as recited in amended Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 10 calls for a recycling method for recycling a developer container that includes a removing step for removing first and second used sealing members first and second openings, respectively, provided in the developer container; a blowing step blows air through the first opening at a first flow rate; a suction step sucks air through the first opening at a second flow rate, which is larger than the first flow rate, to suck toner from the developer container to clean the developer container; a filling step fills the developer container with developer; and a mounting step mounts the first and second new sealing members to seal the first and second openings, while the blowing step and the suction step are carried out concurrently while supplying ambient air into the developer container through an ambient air inlet.

It is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 10, which calls for blowing air through and sucking air from a common opening, is also allowable over Berns, et al. and Ban, et al.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that neither Berns, et al. nor Ban, et al. anticipate the claimed invention as recited in amended Claims 1 and 10.

Dependent Claims

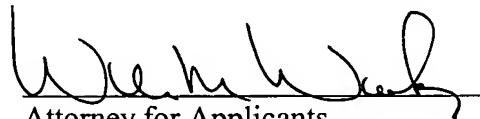
Claims 2 through 9 and 11 through 18 depend either directly or indirectly from one of Claims 1 and 10 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicants' invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Closing Comments

It is respectfully submitted that the claims on file are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wannisky', written over a horizontal line.

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